

# THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD

By Homer Duncan

The Gospel of Christ, the most wonderful message in time and in eternity, is based on the death and resurrection of Christ. The central message of the first four books of the New Testament is the death and resurrection of Christ. Throughout the book of Acts His death and resurrection go hand in hand.

“He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3).

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:23-24).

“You killed the prince of life; God raised Him from the dead” (Acts 3:15)

“Whom ye crucified, God raised from the dead” (Acts 4:10)

“Who they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day” (Acts 10:39-40)

“They took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulcher, but God raised Him from the dead” (Acts 13:29-30)

In Thessalonica the Apostle Paul alleged “...that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.” (Acts 17:3 NASB)

When Paul stood before Agrippa he said, “That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead” (Acts 26:23). The message of the Epistles have no meaning apart from Christ’s death and resurrection.

“He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25).

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10). Reconciled by the death of Christ; saved through the life of Christ.

Though we can find expressions of the gospel from Genesis to Revelation, there is but one place in the Bible where it is clearly defined for us. This is in the first four verses of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians where we read,

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I

preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,” (1 Corinthians 15:1–4 NASB).

Let us depend on the Spirit of God to enable us to understand what was accomplished by Christ in His death and resurrection.

## **TWELVE MAJOR TRANSACTIONS OF CALVARY**

### **I. THE SIN QUESTION WAS SETTLED**

How few Christians understand this! Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3). Christ bore our sins in his body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24). He suffered for sins (1 Pet. 3:18). He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26). He was actually made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).

At the cross our sins were cast behind the back of God (Isaiah 38:17). They were buried in the depths of the deepest sea (Micah 7:19). They were removed as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). They were blotted out like a thick cloud (Isaiah 44:22).

As Christ hung on the cross, He cried, “Telestai.” The King James translation is “It is finished.” The word literally means “Paid in Full.” It is the word that merchant stamped on a bill when it was paid. If a bill is paid once it will not have to be paid again.

Let me illustrate it in this way. Each month I go to the bank and pay on a note that I owe. Suppose that a wealthy friend of mine learns that I am having a hard time making these payments, and he goes to the bank and pays the entire debt for me. If my friend pays for me, will I have to pay to? Of course not! Would the banker be an honorable man if he had accepted my friend's payment and then made me pay too? Very few Christians see the truth of what the Holy Spirit of God is trying to say to us. When Christ died on the cross, He paid our sin debt. He died for all of our sins - past, present, and future. All of our sins were in the future when Christ died on the cross. I say it reverently, God would not be a holy God if he accepted the payment that Christ made for our sins and then made us pay too. That is why Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24) and why the Apostle Paul said, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ” (Rom. 8:1). This is the very heart of the gospel message. If you do not understand this you do not understand the gospel of Christ.

## II. CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR A HOLY GOD TO FORGIVE SIN

"It is commonly believed that God forgives sinners because of His love for them; but we must never forget that God is holy and that if He were to arbitrarily forgive sin, He would violate His own holiness. How can God be holy, just and righteous, and yet justify and forgive depraved men who are guilty of the most dastardly deeds? The cross is the answer to this question. For at the cross the Lord Jesus Christ, the spotless Son of God, died for the sins of the whole world. He suffered the consequences of sin that every man was due to bear. Because of what Christ has done, God is now free to righteously justify and forgive the vilest sinner on the face of the earth.

Let me give this illustration to show why God cannot forgive sinners merely because of his love for them. Suppose that a young man who has confessed that he is guilty of a dastardly deed is brought before a judge. Suppose that the judge should say something like this, "My boy, I have known you all of your life. Your father is one of my best friends; and because of my great love for you, I am going to forgive you for what you have done." The judge would not be just if he did this because others who had been wronged by the young man's crime would not receive justice.

Someone must pay the penalty for sin. Christ did this when he died on the cross for the sins of the whole world, therefore God can be just and at the same time the justifier of him who believes in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

## III. THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS THE BASIS OF OUR JUSTIFICATION

To justify means to declare righteous. The average professing Christian thinks that he is justified on the basis of how he lives and what he does. He thinks that he is justified because he is born into a Christian family or because he attends church every Sunday and observes the ordinances. Such thinking is erroneous. God Almighty, Himself, declares us to be righteous, not on the basis of who we are or on the basis of what we have done, but on the basis of what Christ has done for us in his death and resurrection. This is the gospel message.

## IV. THE CROSS IS THE BASIS OF OUR SANCTIFICATION

Not only did the Lord Jesus die for our sins; He died for us; we died with him; we were crucified with him (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20). Even though our sins are forgiven, the old self, the flesh, the old man, our old nature is a factory which keeps on producing sin. We must learn to exchange our life for his. Read our booklets *Abundant Life*, *Christ is Your Life*, and *Nine Biblical Basics*.

## V. THE CROSS IS THE BASIS OF OUR RECONCILIATION

“Namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their wrongdoings against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:19). To reconcile means to restore to friendship or harmony. Two friends who have been at enmity are reconciled; husbands and wives are reconciled; parents and children are reconciled.

In the beginning of creation God and man were in perfect harmony, but when man sinned, he turned his back on God, and God who cannot look with favor on sin, so to speak turned his back on man. Sin caused man to be driven from the presence of God. But because of the cross, God is propitiated concerning sin. He was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. He now stands with outstretched arms facing the center, pleading with the sinner to return to Him. The ministry of reconciliation has been committed to the believer. We are to plead with sinners to be reconciled to God.

## VI. THE CROSS IS THE BASIS OF OUR REDEMPTION

The New Scofield Reference Bible gives this excellent note on redemption. “‘Redemption’ means to deliver by paying price. The work of Christ fulfilling the O.T. types and prophecies of redemption is set forth in three principal Greek words: (1) Agorazo, to buy in the market (from agora, market). Man is viewed as a slave ‘sold under sin’ (Rom. 7:14) and under sentence of death (Ezek. 18:4; Jn. 3:18-19, Rom. 6:23) but subject to redemption by the purchase price of the blood of the Redeemer (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23, 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4). (2) Exagorazo, to buy out of the market, i.e., to purchase and remove from further sale (Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5), speaking of the finality of the work of redemption. And (3) lutroo, to loose or set free (Lk. 24:21; Ti. 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18), noun form, lutrosis (Lk. 2:38; Heb. 9:12). Compare also ‘redeemed’ (lit. to make redemption, GK. epoiesen lutrosin, Lk. 1:68), and ‘deliverance’ (intensive form, apolutrosis) used commonly to indicate release of a slave (Lk. 21:28; Rom. 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7,14; 4:30; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15; 11:35). Redemption is by sacrifice and by power (Ex. 14:30, note); Christ paid the price, the Holy Spirit makes deliverance actual in experience (Rom. 8:2). See Ex. 14:30, note, note 1; Rom. 1:16, note.”

## VII. THROUGH THE CROSS WE ARE REDEEMED FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). Since we have been crucified with Christ we are no longer “under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14). We are dead to the law. “Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God” (Rom. 7:4).

#### VIII. THROUGH CHRIST'S DEATH WE ARE DELIVERED FROM THE WORLD (Gal. 1:4; 6:14)

#### IX. ON THE CROSS CHRIST TASTED OF DEATH FOR EVERY MAN (Heb. 2:9)

He took the sting out of death (1 Cor. 15:55).

#### X. CHRIST DEFEATED SATAN AT CALVARY

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). When the Son of God died on the cross the host hell danced with glee because they thought that Christ had been destroyed. Actually the exact opposite was true. Satan was and is the defeated foe. His ultimate doom is sure. During the church age he is still allowed to go about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). During the millennial reign of Christ he will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Rev. 20:2,3). At the end of the millennial he will be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone where the beast and false prophet are (Rev. 20:10). If Satan has been defeated, why is he still free to torment the children of God? There's no doubt about it, Satan is still the enemy of God, and he is the enemy of the children of God. Read our booklet, *Satan's Strategy*. Satan has been pictured as a vicious dog on a leash. He can go so far but no further (Job 1:12; 2:6). One reason why God permits Satan to move about is so that the Christian will learn to exercise authority over him. We are to resist Satan (Jas. 4:7). We are to remind him that he has a defeated foe, that his doom is sure and that his time is short. For added material about the authority of the believer, write for our three Prayer Kits.

#### XI. CHRIST SPOILED PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS AT THE CROSS

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15).

#### XII. CHRIST DEMONSTRATED THE LOVE OF GOD AT CALVARY

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he lay down his life for us: and we are to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 Jn 3:16). "In this was manifested the love of God taught us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 Jn. 4:9).

## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

After Jesus died on the cross, his body was placed in the newly made tomb of Joseph of Arimathea where it remained for three days and three nights. Early in the morning on the first day of the week several women came to the sepulchre to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. When they arrived at the sepulchre, they found that the large stone over the entrance had been rolled away. When they entered the sepulchre, they discovered that the body of Jesus was not there. Being much perplexed as to what had happened they were startled when two angels in shining garments ask them "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" The angels then told them, "He is not here but is risen." The angels reminded the women how that Christ had told them that he would rise on the third day after he was crucified. When the women gave the angelic message to the disciples, Peter and John ran to the sepulchre to see what had happened. John, being younger, got there first and looked into the sepulchre but did not go in. Peter went inside and saw the burial bandages which had been wrapped around the body of Christ lying undisturbed. The body of Christ had slipped out of them. The grave clothes had not been unwound and left in a tangle here, but they were still wrapped together as they had been when placed about the body of Jesus. But now they were empty. The body of Jesus had slipped out of them, and the grave clothes were left as an empty shell. The napkin which had been placed about the head of Jesus was not lying with the linen clothes, but it was wrapped together in a place by itself. Peter did not understand what all of this meant, but when John entered the sepulchre and saw the empty grave clothes, he knew that Jesus had been raised from the dead (Cf. Matt. 28; Mark 16; Lk:24; John 19-20).

All of the disciples went to their own homes, but Mary Magdalene stood outside the sepulcher weeping. When she looked into the sepulcher, she saw two angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They asked her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Then she saw Jesus standing in the garden, but she did not know that it was Jesus. He said to her, "Whom seekest thou?" She thought he was the gardener and said to him, "If thou have borne him hence, tell me where though has laid him, and I will take him away." Then Jesus said unto her, "Mary". She at once recognized him and called him, Rabboni, which means, Master. Jesus told her not to touch him, because he had not yet ascended to the Father. He told her to go and tell the disciples that He was alive. (John 20:11-18 paraphrase).

On that evening of the same day Jesus appeared to the disciples to show them that He was alive. For some reason Thomas was not present at that time. When the disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, he said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side I will not believe." Eight days later Jesus appeared to the disciples again when Thomas was with them. He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God." (John 20:19-28 paraphrase).

Luke tells us that Jesus showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3). The apostle Paul writes, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present" (1 Cor. 15:5,6).

## **BUT HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT JESUS WAS REALLY RAISED FROM THE DEAD?**

### **I. WE HAVE A CLEAR TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

We either believe the Bible, or we do not believe it. (If you have doubts about the inspiration of the Scriptures, ask us to send you a copy of "Why I believe the Bible")

### **II. MATTHEW ARNOLD CALLED THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST THE BEST ATTESTED FACT OF HISTORY**

Dr. William Lyon Phelps of Yale University has written, "The historical evidence for the resurrection is stronger than for any other miracle." The noted scholar, Professor Edwin Gordon Selwyn has said, "The fact that Christ rose from the dead on the third day in full continuity of body and soul – that fact seems as secure as historical evidence can make it." The noted lawyer, sir Edward Clarke wrote, "I have made a prolong study of the evidences for the events of the first Easter day. To me the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the High Court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling. Inference follows on evidence, and a truthful witness is always artless and disdains effect. The gospel evidence for the resurrection is of this class, and as a lawyer I accept it unreservedly as a testimony of truthful men to facts they were able to substantiate." The encyclopedia published by Columbia University of New York makes the statement, "The gospels do not leave Jesus in his grave. On the first day of the week some of the women going to the tomb found it opened, and the body of Jesus gone. An angel at the tomb told them that He had risen from the dead. Soon they saw him and talked with him, and his disciples met him, and many others as well." Lord Lyndhurst, one of the greatest legal minds of British history, wrote, "I know pretty well what evidence is; and I tell you, such evidence as that for the resurrection has never broken down yet."

### **III. IF CHRIST DID NOT RISE FROM THE DEAD, WHAT BECAME OF HIS BODY?**

The Jews reported and still commonly believed that his disciples came by night and stole him away (Matt. 28:13). If this is true, how do you account for the boldness of the apostles and proclaiming the message of the risen Christ? Is it reasonable to believe that men would hazard their lives to propagate a message that they knew was a fraud?

If, as others say, his enemy stole his body, why did not these enemies produce the body of Christ when the apostles were claiming that he was risen from the dead?

#### IV. THE GREATEST EVIDENCE TO AN UNBELIEVING WORLD THAT CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD IS THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF HIS RESURRECTED LIFE AS EVIDENCED IN THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM

For twenty centuries sinners have become saints: cannibals and headhunters have been redeemed from their degradation; thieves have become honest men; fallen women have been made pure; drunkards have been made sober; and dope fiends have been delivered from a living hell. Changed and transformed lives demonstrate that Christ lives and that his gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

#### V. EVERY TRULY BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIAN KNOWS THAT CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD SINCE THE LIVING CHRIST NOW LIVES BY FAITH THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HIS HEART

The Christian can sing, "He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today. He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart."

### **FOURTEEN THINGS ACCOMPLISHED BY CHRIST'S RESURRECTION**

#### I. HE CONQUERED DEATH

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). "For as an Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). The word death is used in the Bible in three principal ways: (1) physical death, (2) spiritual death, and (3) the second death. Physical death is the separation of the soul and the spirit from the body. Spiritual death is the separation of man from God. The second death is the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14). In his resurrection Christ conquered physical death, and will ultimately bring about the end of all physical death (1 Cor. 15:26). He now gives spiritual life to all who put their trust in him. He saves from the second death all who come to Him for life.

#### II. THROUGH HIS RESURRECTION CHRIST BECAME IMMORTAL

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). At the present time He alone is immortal (1 Tim. 6:16).



### III. BEFORE THE CROSS DEATH REIGNED, BUT SINCE CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION GRACE NOW REIGNS THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO ETERNAL LIFE

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21).

### IV. THROUGH HIS RESURRECTION HE FULFILLED THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES THAT PREDICTED HIS RESURRECTION

"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:10). "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee" (Ps. 22:22).

### V. HE FULFILLED THE PREDICTIONS HE HAD MADE ABOUT HIS OWN RESURRECTION

"From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16:21). "And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry" (Matt. 17:23). "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18).

### VI. HIS RESURRECTION PROVED HIS DEITY

"And declared to be the son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

### VII. BECAUSE OF HIS RESURRECTION HE NOW GIVES EVERLASTING LIFE TO ALL WHO COME TO HIM

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24)

### VIII. HIS RESURRECTION IS THE BASIS OF OUR JUSTIFICATION

"Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

#### IX. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST GIVES A FOUR-FOLD HOPE TO THE BELIEVER

First, he knows that he now has everlasting life, and that even though he may die physically, he does not face condemnation, but glory. Second, the hope that he now has is an anchor for his soul. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:19). Third, Christ's resurrection gives him hope in that life now has meaning. Fourth, he has hope and assurance that he will see his friends and loved ones again who died in Christ. He knows that death does not end all.

#### X. AFTER CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD, HE POURED OUT THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

All of the blessings of the Holy Spirit are now available to those who learn to walk in the Spirit. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

#### XI. CHRIST IS NOW SEATED ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS

"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21)".

#### XII. HE IS THE HEAD OVER HIS BODY, WHICH IS THE CHURCH

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." (Eph. 1:22).

#### XIII. THROUGH HIS RESURRECTION HE BECAME A MERCIFUL AND COMPASSIONATE HIGH PRIEST WHO EVER LIVES TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US

#### XIV. HIS SECOND COMING TO RULE ON THE EARTH AS KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY HIS RESURRECTION

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:16).

## **ANOTHER GOSPEL**

In the light of changing world conditions, some are asking if the church does not need a new message for the modern world in which we live. Many apostate, so-called Christian leaders have openly discarded the Gospel of Christ as being obsolete. They are substituting psychology and psychiatry for the Gospel. What folly! And how great will be the condemnation of all who do such. Any man who talks about changing the Gospel does not know what it is and has no right to wear the name of being a Christian.

Then there are some who talk about the "social gospel. "You will not find this terminology in the Bible. In a Scriptural sense there is no such thing as a social gospel. The gospel of the grace of God has social implications. When a man is saved by the gospel, his life will be changed and transformed by the mighty power of God. When a person is born of God, he is made a partaker of the very nature of God (2 Peter 1:4). Since the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost (Rom. 5:5), he will have a compassion for the souls of men, and he will have a concern for their physical well-being.

Satan is the arch deceiver and the great counterfeiter. He delights in perverting the gospel of the grace of God. The apostle Paul wrote as follows to the churches of Galatia: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9). Men pervert the gospel when they add to it or when they take from it. All who do so are under the curse of God. In the beginning of the Christian dispensation legalizers came to Antioch from Judea which said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). A sect of the Pharisees which believed, taught, "that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5). The first church council was called at Jerusalem to settle this matter; and after much discussion, it was decided that both Jews and Gentiles were saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:11).

## **THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD**

It is utterly impossible for us to understand the gospel of Christ without having a clear conception of the grace of God. We must know the grace of God in truth (1 Peter 5:12). Grace makes Christianity distinct from all pagan and pseudo-Christian religions. All religious systems tell man what he must do in order to obtain merit and to find favor in the sight of God. Christianity tells man what God has done for him through Christ.

## DEFINITIONS OF GRACE

The exact meaning of the word grace as it is used in the New Testament should be absolutely clear to every child of God. When used in a theological sense, the dictionary defines grace as “God’s unmerited mercy toward mankind.” Thayer, the great Greek scholar, says that grace is “the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in the Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to exercise of Christian virtues.”

Dr. L. S. Chafer says, “Grace means pure unrecompensed kindness and favor. What is done is done graciously. From this exact meaning there can be no departure; otherwise grace ceases to be grace. To arrive at the scope and force of the Bible doctrine of salvation by grace we need to follow consistently the path indicated by the exact meaning of the word. Grace is infinite love expressing itself in infinite goodness.”

Dr. Charles C. Ryrie says, “Grace is a combination of God’s sovereignty and favor exercised on the behalf of the creature.” The most common definition of grace is “unmerited favor.” Perhaps you would like to remember this play on words:

God’s  
Riches  
At  
Christ’s  
Expense

Though the grace of God is manifested in the Old Testament, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ gave the word new meaning and raised it to a much higher level. The apostle Paul, the great champion of grace, systematized the doctrine and shows us that grace is all that God has done for man in Christ. As a Pharisee, Paul had been schooled in the idea that favor with God was earned by human merit; but when he met Jesus on the Damascus Road, he began to see the truth of God in a new light. When the full revelation of the grace of God was given to him he saw that the gospel of the grace of God centered in the death and resurrection of Christ. What he saw, he preached, practiced and defended.

## **TWENTY-EIGHT BASIC PRINCIPLES OF GRACE**

1. The foundation of God's grace is the cross of Christ. The New Testament is literally filled with this message. "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).
2. Because of the cross God can be righteous and at the same time justify sinners (Rom. 3:24-26).
3. Because of the cross all sin can be completely and perfectly forgiven (Rom. 3:24).
4. Because of the cross all sinners regardless of their vile condition are invited to come to God (Rev. 22:17).
5. The grace of God shines brightest against the background of sin.
6. There can be no manifestation of the grace of God, for saint or sinner, apart from human depravity, because if there is worth or merit, God cannot deal with men on the basis of grace (Rom. 11:32, 33).
7. Since the death of Christ must be complemented by the resurrection of Christ, God's grace is dependent on the resurrection of Christ, "who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).
8. The grace of God not only forgives the sinner's sin but also it takes the one who is dead in trespasses and sins and gives him everlasting life (Eph. 2:1; John 5:24; 10:10). The life that God gives the forgiven sinner is the life of the risen Christ (Col. 3:4).
9. Man's conception of salvation is that he must "do" something to be saved. He thinks that by his own works, prayers, ceremonies, sacrifices, and pilgrimages he can obtain merit and favor with God. All of this is contrary to grace. The repentant sinner is excepted in the Person of God's Son (Eph. 1:6), entirely apart from his own works.
10. Salvation by grace must be the free gift of God (Rom. 5:12-21; 6:23). A gift ceases to be a gift if any price is paid for it.
11. Man's conception of living the Christian life is that he must do the best he can, therefore he constantly seeks to be better and to do better. Grace teaches us that the Christian life is the manifestation of the life of Christ through the believer. This is the true grace of God, for it is Christ in us enabling us to be and to do what we can never be or do in our own strength.

12. The grace of God cannot be fully manifested in the life of the believer until he recognizes his own other depravity and looks by faith to the living Christ to do for him what he cannot do in his own strength.
13. Since grace is unmerited favor, it cannot be withheld or lessened because of the unworthiness of the recipient.
14. Grace ceases to be grace when the slightest degree of human merit is recognized.
15. Grace cannot be exercised in the payment of a debt, nor can it incur a debt.
16. Grace is exercised in spite of human guilt.
17. Grace deals with a person without the slightest reference to his desire.
18. Grace never imposes the slightest obligation for payment or remuneration (if it did, it would cease to be grace).
19. And yet, grace can be the recipient of a fully surrendered life that is given out of gratitude (Rom. 12:1,2). When we understand the grace of God, we exclaim, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."
20. The sovereignty of God and the grace of God are inseparably connected. Though the tremendous doctrine of the sovereignty of God cannot be adequately discussed in the brief pages of this little booklet, it is important for us to see the relationship between grace and sovereignty. The doctrine of divine election clearly teaches that all men are not in the company of the redeemed. If all men were elected to salvation, all men would be saved (Rom. 8:29, 30). This causes us to ask, "Why were not all men elected?" We should ask, "Why did God choose any?" For the answer to this question read our booklet, "A Word in Season."
21. Since Grace is undeserved favor, it is not the inalienable right of all men. No man deserves the salvation of God. All who are saved are saved by the grace of God. If any man deserves to be saved, it would not be salvation by grace.
22. Though the above statements are true, the grace of God and salvation through Christ are freely offered to all men (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; Rev. 22:17). We are commissioned to go into all the world with a "whosoever will" Gospel. (This apparent contradiction is one of the themes of Scripture that transcends the range of human understanding, cf. Deut. 29:29). It is a geometrical axiom that two parallel lines will never meet, but two parallel lines do meet in infinity. So these two truths that seem contradictory in our minds are in perfect harmony in the mind of God. Dwight L. Moody explained it in this way, "I see a door with the words written over it, 'Whosoever will, may come.' I enter the door and look back to see what is written over it on the inside, and I read 'Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world' (Eph. 1:4)."

23. Grace and faith must go hand in hand. "By grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 3:24; 5:1). Salvation is by faith that it might be by grace (Rom. 4:16). If salvation were faith plus anything else as a condition of salvation, it would cease to be salvation by grace. This does not rule out the importance of repentance, confession, baptism, or good works in their proper place.

24. Faith and repentance go hand in hand; they are twin graces. It is not a saving faith which does not cause the sinner to repent. Repentance means turning to God from sin. When the apostle Paul preached before King Agrippa, he stated that his commission to the Gentiles was threefold, "to open their eyes, and to cause them to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). The Holy Spirit opens the eyes of sinners when we give them the truth, but men are not saved by knowing the truth but by believing it and acting on it. If they are to be saved, they must turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

25. The Lord Jesus Christ taught, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32,33). The Apostle Paul said, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9, 10). If a person really believes in Christ, he will be glad to publicly confess Him.

We must make the distinction between confessing Christ as our Savior and in confessing our sins. The confession of sin is never a condition of salvation. First John 1:9 is addressed to the believer as a condition of restoration, and not to the sinner as a condition of salvation.

26. Baptism is the outward manifestation of an inward faith. In every instance in the New Testament it follows saving faith. If baptism as a notorious act is made a condition of salvation, salvation would not be by grace. For the very moment merit is accepted, grace ceases to be grace.

27. The very moment the slightest amount of good works are required as a condition of salvation, it ceases to be salvation by grace, for grace and works cannot be mixed as a condition of salvation. "And if by grace, then it is no more works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:6). "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:4-5).

28. This does not rule out the importance of good works, for salvation that is by grace will produce good works (Eph. 2:10; Phil. 2:12, 13; Titus 3:8). The professed faith that does not produce good works is dead (James 2:17, 20, 26), and therefore cannot save (James 2:14).

## **THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). The importance of understanding the foregoing principles of grace cannot be overestimated; but if our understanding of grace is limited to principles, we shall come far short of entering into the revelation of God for us. Grace in the New Testament is invariably connected with the person of Christ. He is the supreme revelation of God’s grace; He is the grace of God personified.

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11). It appeared in the person of Christ. “By grace are ye saved” (Eph. 2:8). We are saved by Christ. “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24), we must recognize that it is Christ, Himself, who is the Savior. “Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for HE shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). We are not saved by a church, nor by a creed, nor by keeping the law, nor by our own works, but by a person the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible presents salvation in three tenses: past, present and future. “Who delivered us” (past tense), “and doth deliver” (present tense), “he will yet deliver” (future tense) (II Cor. 1:10). “He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26 – past tense). “Now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24 – present tense). “Shall he appear the second time” (Heb. 9:28 – future tense). In the past Christ saved us from the guilt and penalty of sin. In the present he saves us from the power of sin. In the future he will save us from the presence of sin. In the past we were made a child of God the very moment we excepted Christ as our Savior. In the present we are to be conformed to the image of Christ. In the future we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is (1 Jn 3:2).

The present tense of our salvation is not a matter of imitation, but of identification. We are not saved by grace by trying to follow the example of Christ, but we are saved by grace when we let the living Christ live in and through us (Gal. 2:8, 20; Col. 1:29; 3:4). The Lord Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the grace of God.

## **EXAMPLES OF THE GRACE OF GOD**

The Bible is filled with many marvelous examples of the grace of God. Adam and Eve deserved the judgment and punishment of God, yet in Grace God drove them from the garden of Eden lest they eat of the tree of life and live forever in their fall in condition. God manifested his grace to them in providing the clothing of skins which speaks of their redemption. Noah deserved nothing more than the men about him, but he found Grace in the sight of the Lord. It was the grace of God that called the heathen Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees that he might become the father of many nations. What grace was manifested in the life of Jacob! By nature he was a crook and a trickster, and he became Israel, a prince with God.



Behold the marvelous grace of God in the life of David. He was the youngest of his father's sons, but he was chosen of God to be the king of Israel. What else but grace can explain how David could be a man after God's own heart even though he was guilty of murder and adultery.

The story of the prodigal son is a beautiful illustration of the grace of God. The younger son left home, went to a far country and wasted his inheritance in riotous living. After having drunk the dregs of the cup of sin, he realized what a fool he had been. Though he realized that he deserved nothing from his father, he decided to return home and ask for a place among the servants. The father was under no obligation to do anything for the boy, but because of his great love for him, he looked longingly day by day for his return. When the father saw him coming a long way off, he ran to meet him. The son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the father said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him: and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (cf. Luke 15:12-24). The boy deserved nothing, but by grace the father restored him to full sonship.

The New Testament gives several accounts of adulteress fallen women who are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 7:36-50; John 4:6-42; 8:1-11). According to the Law they should be stoned to death for their sin, but the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ not only forgives their sin but also makes them pure and spotless in the sight of God. Nicodemus, the religious man, and Cornelius, the good moral man, had to be saved by grace in exactly the same way as the vilest sinner, "for God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32). The righteousness of Nicodemus and Cornelius were but as filthy rags in the sight of God (Isaiah 64:6).

What could the thief on the cross do to earn or merit his salvation? With his hands and feet nailed to the cross, what kind of work could he do? But by faith he looked to Christ, and God had said, "look unto me, and be ye saved" (Isa. 45:22). When he prayed, "Lord, remember me," Jesus said to him, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." The multitudes of saints who follow in his train have said, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." Thousands have come to Christ with these words, "Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O, Lamb of God, I come."

Did Peter deserve to be a chosen vessel of God to bring salvation to the Jews? This rough, uncouth, unlearned fisherman cursed and swore when a little girl asked him if he were one of Christ's disciples. But when Jesus turned and looked at him, it broke his heart, and he went out and wept bitterly. He knew the meaning of repentance. When the risen Christ told the women to go and tell his disciples that he had risen from the dead, Peter was the only disciple that Christ mentioned by name. Jesus wanted Peter to know that he loved him and that he had forgiven him.

Paul was the champion of grace because he was a trophy of grace. He recognized himself to be the chief of sinners. Before his conversion, and blind religious zeal, he had hounded and

persecuted Christians unto death. Though the chief of sinners, he was the chosen instrument of God to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). In another place Paul states the same truth by saying, "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1:29). The grace of God and the power of the indwelling Christ are one and the same.

Augustine had to sink to the lowest depths in the degradation of sin that he might be a champion of grace. It took John Newton, a vile libertine, to write, "Amazing grace: how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me: I once was lost but now am found, was blind, but now I see!"

### **THE PURPOSE OF GRACE**

The apostle Paul wrote to the Saints at Ephesus that they had been predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace (Eph. 1:5, 6). The twenty-four elders around the throne of God sing, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). The grace of God is for the glory of God, therefore everything that we do should be for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). The glory of God is the manifestation of his power and attributes. God is to be glorified in the lives of believers. He does all of this "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7). "To the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:6).

### **LAW AND GRACE**

An understanding of the law and the purposes why it was given is essential if we are to know and understand the grace of God. Since man is by nature a legalist, and since grace is a principle that is contrary to the thinking of the natural man, the only person who can understand these two systems is the person who has been born again by the Spirit of God, and who is taught by the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that law and grace are two distinct and contrary systems. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4). "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; we should serve in the newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:6). "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant

according to the election of grace. And if it be by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:5, 6). "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16). (For other Scriptures to show the clear distinction between law and grace read: Galatians 4:19 – 5:6; Hebrews 8:7-10:39; Hebrews 12:18-24). There can be no mingling of law and grace. This does not mean that we cannot find grace in the Old Testament, nor does it mean that we will not find law in the New Testament. As the spirit-taught believer grows in grace, and as he is established in the truth of God, he will understand the relationship between these two systems.

### **A STUDY OF THE LAW**

Law is a term that is employed almost 200 times in the Bible. It signifies the revealed will of God with respect to human conduct. Though "the" law was given by Moses, God's laws were in operation long before this (Gen. 26:5). And even though grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, the New Testament speaks of "the law of the spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2), and the "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). The New Testament is filled with laws (Eph. 4:17 – 6:9).

The Mosaic law is divided into commandments (moral), judgments (social), and ordinances (religious). For 613 commandments -- 365 negative and 248 positive. The law is holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12). In preaching grace Paul asked, "do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31). What sense did Paul establish the law? In the sense that he put it in its proper place as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24), and not as a condition of salvation (Rom. 3:20).

Many problems concerning the Mosaic law will be solved for us if we keep in mind that the Mosaic law was given to the children of Israel and not to the Gentiles. Many scriptures clearly show this: "These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses" (Lev. 26:46). "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature of the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves" (Rom. 2:14).

You will search the Scriptures in vain in an effort to find one single verse of scripture that teaches that any person was ever saved by keeping the law. The Lord Jesus Christ was the only person who was able to keep the law. If men could be saved by keeping the law, Jesus died on the cross in vain. When you ask a legalist if he keeps the law, he invariably will answer, "I try." "To try" is not enough for the Bible says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). In order to break a chain you do not have to smash it into bits. The chain is broken when one link is broken. Window glass does not have to be smashed to be broken. It is broken when one corner is broken.

## WHY THE LAW WAS GIVEN

**1. The law was given to show man his need of a Savior.** It is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). Let me illustrate it in this way. Here is a dark attic that is filled with old trunks, stacks of magazines that are covered with dust and cobwebs. When I go into the attic to see what I can find, I take my flashlight to show me the way. The light reveals to me what is there. The light does not make the attic dirty, nor does it make it clean, but it reveals the condition of the attic. In the same way, the law does not make me bad nor does it make me good, but it reveals to me the condition of my own heart leading me to trust the Savior. Therefore the law is a tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit to convict men of sin. It shows them their need of a Savior. We should use the law in our preaching to show men their helplessness and hopelessness before a holy God. This leads us to the second reason why the law was given.

**2. The law was given to reveal the holiness of God.** The Bible not only reveals to us that God is love and that he wants to save the sinner, but also it reveals that God is holy and that he hates sin. God cannot and will not look with favor on sin. Since He is holy, He must punish sin. Sin must be punished in the person of the sinner or in the Person of the sinner's Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen that this is one of the great accomplishments of Calvary.

**3. The law was given as a moral standard that man might know what is right and what is wrong.** In the Bureau of Standards in Washington there is a standard measure for a yard, a gallon and a pound. Think of the confusion that would result in the United States if there were no standard measurements. Our religious leaders have discarded God's law as a standard of moral values, and moral confusion has resulted. Having thrown away God's standard of moral values, there is no way of determining what is right and what is wrong. Therefore, the new morality teaches us that adultery and sodomy are not wrong.

**4. The law was given to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin (Rom. 7:13).** Man is prone to look lightly on sin. He excuses it as a weakness. He justifies sin by saying that it is natural and by saying that others do worse than he does. The sinfulness of sin is seen at the cross where we see a holy God pouring out his wrath on his own Son who had been made sin for us. The sinfulness of sin is seen in its consequences. It brings sorrow, suffering and death. The unrepentant sinner will spend eternity in Hell because of the terribleness of his sin.

## CONTRAST BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE

The Law was given by Moses,  
Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

The Law was written on tables of stone,  
Grace is written in fleshly tables of the heart.

The Law was given at Mount Sinai,

Grace was manifested at Mount Calvary.

Law brought Israel to a mountain that burned with fire,  
Grace brings us to the city of the living God.

The giving of the Law was a terrible sight,  
The manifestation of grace is glorious to behold.

The Law was given to an earthly people,  
Grace is given to those in the heavenlies.

The Law is the old covenant  
Grace is the new covenant.

Law is a system of probation,  
Grace is a system of favor.

Law is a ministration of death,  
Grace is a ministration of the Spirit.

The letter of the Law kills,  
Grace gives abundant life.

The Law shuts every mouth before God,  
Grace opens every mouth in praise to God.

The Law puts a guilty distance between God and man,  
Grace brings sinful man nigh unto a holy God.

The Law condemns the best man,  
Grace freely justifies the worst.

The Law blesses the good,  
Grace saves the bad.

Under the Law the sheep die for the shepherd,  
Under grace the Shepherd dies for the sheep.

The Law demands an eye for an eye,  
Grace says, "love your enemies."

The Law demands that the prodigal be stoned,  
Grace clothes the prodigal with the best robe.

The Law demands that the adulteress be stoned,  
Grace says, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more."

The Law keeps men in bondage,  
Grace makes men free.

The Law cannot deliver from sin's power,  
Grace delivers from the dominion of sin.

The Law puts men under the curse,  
Under grace Christ became a curse for us.

Under the law there is no justification,  
Under grace we are justified freely.

The Law cannot make men righteous,  
Grace clothes men in the perfect righteousness of Christ.

The Law does not give men power over sin,  
Under grace we are endued with the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Law cannot give peace,  
Grace gives the peace that passeth understanding.

The Law cannot give happiness,  
Grace gives joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The Law cannot transform men's lives,  
Grace changes us into the image of Christ.

The Law cannot save,  
Grace saves to the uttermost.

### **THE BELIEVERS RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAW**

The believer is not under law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14). He is dead to the law, because he is married to Christ (Rom. 7:4). All who are under the law are under the curse (Gal. 3:10). Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13). When a person who has been saved by grace goes back and starts living under the law, the Bible describes him as having fallen from grace (Gal. 5:14). He has turned from grace as a principal of life and has fallen from grace in the sense that he has put himself under the bondage of the law.

The life of the believer is to be a walk in the Spirit. As long as he is led and controlled by the Holy Spirit, he does not need laws to guide and control him; For the law was not made for righteous men but for the lawless and disobedient (I Tim. 1:9, 10). Perhaps an illustration will help. There are laws in the state of Texas that require a mother to take care of her children, but most mothers do not know that such laws exist. They do not take care of their children because the law requires them to do so, but they take care of their children because they love them. The carnal believer lives a life of constant fear. With his eye on the law, he does the best he can to live as he thinks a Christian should. Such a life is miserable and wretched. It brings neither peace nor joy to the one who lives in this way. The spirit-lead and spirit-taught believer realizes that he is under grace, but this does not cause him to throw off all restraint and live after the flesh. He is a new creature in Christ; and because he has a new nature, he desires to please God and all that he does. How wretched is a life lived under the law, but how wonderful is the life that is lived under grace. Where do you live?

Many churches where grace is preached, law is practiced. For example, why do you go to church? If you go because you think that it is your duty to do so, you're living under the law. But if you go because you love the Lord and because you love to be with the people of God, you were living under grace. Why do you read your Bible? If you read it so that you can check a Sunday school envelope on Sunday morning, you are living under law. But if you read it as one lover reads a letter from another, you are living under grace. Why do you pray? If you pray to obtain favor with God, you are living under the law; but if you pray because you find joy in the presence of God, you are living under grace. Why do you witness? Because it is your duty to do so? If so, you are living under the law. But if you witness because Christ is so real and precious to you that you simply must tell someone about him, you are living under grace. Why do you serve the Lord? Because the preacher says that you must visit or else give up your class? If so this is law; but if you let Christ do His work through you, this is grace.

### **CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY**

The grace of God does not mean that the Christian is free to live as he wants to or to do what he pleases. If a person is a Christian, he is married to Christ; and every married person knows that the marriage relationship is not only One of privilege but also one of responsibility. The Apostle Paul, the great champion of grace, divided all of his epistles into two distinct parts. In the first section of each book he presents the unsearchable riches of Christ. He tells the believer of his perfect position in Christ. Then invariably you will find a "wherefore" or a "therefore." In view of all that God has done for us through Christ, we are told of what God wants to do through us as we yield ourselves to Him (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:1; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 4:1; Col. 3:1). It is utterly impossible for the believer to live the life that God expects of him in the energy of the flesh. A casual reading of the New Testament will reveal to us that there are literally hundreds of commandments that we could never meet in our own strength. We are to live in such a way that men will see our lives and glorify our father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). We are to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48). We are to bear much fruit (John 15:8). We are to love one another as Christ loved us (John

15:12). We are to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). We are to give thanks for everything and never to grumble or complain about anything (1 Thess. 5:18). We are to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). Who can live such a life as this? And this is but a small part of the list of things that God expects of us. We are utterly insufficient for such a life. We must discover that our sufficiency is of God (2 Cor. 3:5).

As believers in Christ we have been commissioned to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). It is the will of God for us to give this glorious message to our friends and neighbors; it is the will of God that we should carry it to the ends of the earth. As members of the body of Christ, we do not all have the same function; but it is our responsibility to find and to do the will of God (Rom. 12:1,2).

One day we will have to stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ to be judged for our works (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10). In that day we will have to give account to God for the stewardship which he has given to us. Our works will be tried by fire. All that has been done and fleshly energy will be burned up. That which has been done for the glory of God will stand the test of fire (1 Cor. 3:9-15).

Every scriptural sign indicates that we are drawing close to the end of this age. (For a fuller discussion of the subject, write for our booklet, "An Outline of Things to Come".) Though the great commission was given nearly 2000 years ago, nearly two-thirds of the people of the world have not heard the gospel of Christ. The great need in this hour is for spirit filled Christian soldiers who are sold out to God.

### **MAN IS ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD**

Just as the Christian is accountable to God for the proclamation of the gospel, the sinner must answer to God for what he does with the gospel. Of his own will he can decide to except it or to reject it. The sovereignty of God and the grace of God do not rule out human responsibility. God made man as a free moral agent so that man can choose to accept Christ or reject Christ. If God had made man as a robot, he would never have known his love. Since man is a free moral agent, he is accountable for his actions. He must answer for his sins. At the judgment bar of God all Christ-rejecters will be judged for their sins. The believer does not have to answer for his sins because he has accepted the sacrifice of Christ for them.

There are two sides to the coin of salvation: God's side and man's side. This does not mean that we are teaching that salvation is a joint enterprise between God and man, "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). Salvation is a work of God for man, and no sense a work of man for God. It is by grace through faith plus nothing and minus nothing. But if men are to be saved, they must hear and believe the gospel. They must receive the Lord Jesus Christ into their hearts by faith (John 1:12; 3:36). What does one do with Christ? "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).



## **EXAMPLES OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Bible is filled with examples of free moral agency. Let us go back to the beginning. When God made Adam and placed him in the garden of Eden, he told him that he could eat of all the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God told Adam that if he ate of this tree he would die. Soon Satan appeared on the scene and tempted Adam (through Eve) to eat of the forbidden fruit. Satan told Adam that he would not die, but that he would be made like God if he ate it.

Adam had a decision to make. Of his own will he could choose to believe God, or he could choose to believe Satan. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave unto her husband with her: and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6). (For a fuller discussion of Adam's sin, read our booklet, "A Word in Season".) When Adam chose to believe Satan's lie rather than to believe the truth of God, he plunged the entire human race into sin. Though all of Adam's descendants came into the world with a fallen, sinful nature, they have a will and can choose to serve God or to turn from God.

## **THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL**

Many times during their wilderness wanderings the children of Israel rebelled against God. In one instance God sent poisonous snakes into their camp to punish them for their sins. As people were dying on every hand, they cried to Moses to pray to God to take away the snakes. Instead of doing this God told Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole in the midst of the camp. God promised that if anyone would look at the brazen serpent, he would be healed. This seem to be so foolish that many refused to do it. As a result they died in their sins. But the Bible says, "and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Num. 21:9). The Lord Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15).

Many years ago in England on a cold Sunday morning a small lad was sitting in the balcony of a little church. The weather was so bad that the regular preacher did not keep his appointment, and the lay preacher was preaching on the text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22). As the preacher preached, the boy was convicted of his sin. The preacher exhorted him to look to Christ. And Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "I looked, and the burden of my sin rolled away." This small lad who was thus saved by the marvelous grace of God was destined to become the prince of preachers.

## **MOSES, THE MAN OF GOD**

Moses, the man of God, chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25). He called the children of Israel together and said to them, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (Deut. 30:19, 20). God sets before us life and death, blessing and cursing. We can choose to yield to God and thereby find life, or we can stubbornly continue to live in rebellion against God and thereby be condemned.

## **TWO GENERALS**

Joshua told the children of Israel, "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods your fathers served that we're on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). What is your god? Is it an idol made with men's hands? Is it gold? Is it pleasure? Or have you set your face like a flint to find the true and living God and to know and serve him?

When Elisha, the man of God, told Naaman, the leper, that if he would dip 7 times in the river Jordan he would be cleansed of his leprosy, Naaman turned and went away in a rage. He said, "I thought, he will surely come out and call on the name of LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." Then his servant said to him, "If the profit had bid thee do some great things, wouldest thou not have done it? How much the rather then, when he said to thee, wash and be clean?" Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean (2 Kings 5:10-14). Do you want a religion with pomp and ceremony, or have you come to the fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, where sinners who plunge beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains?

Listen to one of God's great invitations, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isa. 55:1, 2).

This invitation is open to "everyone." The first condition is that you must thirst. If you are content to live in your present condition, there is no hope for you: but when you begin to thirst for God, when you get tired of being a slave to Satan, when you decide that you will no longer be in bondage to some religious system, then you can be saved.

God invites you to come to Him. He loves you and wants to save you. He proved his love for you by giving his Son to die on the cross in your place and stead. The salvation that he offers to you is without money and without price. Come to him, as have a host of others saying, "In my hand no price I bring, simply to the cross, I clean."

God reasons with you, "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread?" (Isaiah 55:2). Are you in bondage to some religious system? Though you faithfully pay the priest, you do not find satisfaction for your soul. Your religion has not given you peace of heart; it has not given you rest in your soul; it has not given you the assurance of your salvation; for only Christ can do this. Why continue to spend your money for that which is not bread?

Then God asks, "and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" (Isaiah 55:2). Perhaps you have lived to make money. Has this satisfied your heart? Things can never satisfy the longings of the human heart. Perhaps you have lived for pleasure. You have drunk the cup to the dregs, and it has left you broken and disillusioned.

Why not try Christ? None who have tried him have ever been disappointed. I am not asking you to try religion. I am not asking you to join the church. I'm not asking you to be better, or to try to do better. As a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, I am asking you to invite Him to come into your heart. I am asking you to turn your life over to him. I am recommending to you that you discover the purpose for which God made you. This is for your own good; it will be for his honor and glory.

May I suggest that you pray a prayer something like this, "Dear heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner and that I need a Savior. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins and that He was raised again from the dead. I now invite him to come into my heart as my Savior and as my Lord. I thank you, in Jesus's name, for saving me."

Now that you have received Christ, you are a babe in Christ. You need spiritual food. This food is the Bible. Read and study it every day so that you will grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. May we have the privilege of sending you a little booklet, "Going on With God", that will help you to get off to a good start in the Christian life? Please reach out to us.